

Wiltshire
Children in Care Council
Annual Report
April 2018 – March 2019

1. Introduction

Wiltshire's Children in Care Council (CiCC) is coordinated by the Children's Commissioning Team within Wiltshire Council. The team's work on youth voice activity supports the Council's ambition that no policy, or service, related to children and young people is developed without first seeking their views. Wiltshire Council believes that participation and involvement is 'the business of every service and organisation that works with children and young people'.

This report provides a summary of CiCC activities over the last twelve months, highlights key messages and outlines priorities for future development.

2. What is CiCC ?

CiCC is a forum for young people, 10 years and above, who live in care. CiCC extends an open invitation to care leavers. Members volunteer to join the CiCC and to have their voices heard in order to improve the lives of children and young people living in care and leaving care. Membership fluctuates as young people move onto new opportunities and given the time that they have available. CiCC strives to be as open, inclusive and accessible as possible and at March 2019 had a membership of 23.

CiCC plans to meet at least every other month. Twice a year, these meetings are held jointly with members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and are called Shared Guardianship Sessions.

Shared Guardianship Sessions – CiCC/Corporate Parent Panel 2019	
March	Tuesday 19 March – Cotswold Space, County Hall, Trowbridge, 5pm-6.30pm
September	Tuesday 10 September – Cotswold Space, County Hall, Trowbridge, 5pm-6.30pm

3. Messages from CiCC members

Since April 2018, CiCC has been consulted on a range of issues and has made the following input - *You said*. In response, councillors and officers have taken actions – *We did*.

	You said	We did
1	<p>We met with the Children and Families Commissioning Team and told them about our placement needs for the Draft Placements Commissioning Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important to be placed near your home when it's the right thing for the child or young person • Food and drink are really important to me when I'm in a new family home 	<p>The Team reported that in relation to many of the points made, amendments have been made to the strategy, as below. In relation to some points, no amendments were made as priorities were addressed in other parts of the strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment to section 1 (introduction) • Amend made to section 9 (strategic priorities)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to be able to do the activities I like – I think it's really important carers encourage me to try new things • I think it's important that carers encourage me to make friends • I want to be placed with a happy and welcoming family • Contact with my siblings is important to me • I don't want lots of moves – I need to get used to living with someone new – I need to try and enjoy it • It's important for me to live near my siblings • It's important that the people who look after me encourage me to go to school • I want enough space – a bedroom of my own is important to me • I want to share a bedroom – I used to live with a lot of people and now there's only me living in my own bedroom • I want to be listened to about what's important for me about my new family home • We need foster carers who have received training around the issues children and young people experience, and training that continues on the job, and partnering • We need foster carers who have really good experience e.g. foster carers who are (or have been) SENCOs or SEND lead workers • Carers need to listen to what a child is like from the child's point of view, as well as from the social worker or foster carer, when we're making a good placement match – good matching will mean a more successful placement • It's really important that I meet by foster carer first before I am placed with them • I think some foster carers are scared to call the Police when a child or young person goes missing, because they become too attached to a child, and therefore don't want to ring the Police – but it's really important to do the right thing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet pt 4 amended of section 3.2.9 (summary of placement need for LAC) • Bullet pt 4 amended of section 3.2.9 (summary of placement need for LAC) • Bullet pt 2 amended of section 3.2.9 (summary of placement need for LAC) • Bullet pt 4 amended of section 3.2.9 (summary of placement need for LAC) • Bullet 5, section 3.2.9 (summary placement need for cyp) amended • Carers need to listen to what a child is like from the child's point of view, as well as from the social worker or foster carer, when we're making a good placement match – good matching will mean a more successful placement. Added to commissioning priorities under section 9 (strategic priorities) • It's really important that I meet my foster carer first before I am placed with them. Added to section 8.1 (views of cyp) • As we grow older, there are too many flaws in how the system and process work. Section 4.2.4 (summary placement needs for CLs) amended in paragraph 1 to include this. • It's important that if you fall back, there is a social worker or PA to sit with you in meetings and refer you on to services – it's important our support system is still there for us. Section 4.2.4 (summary placement needs for CLs) amended in paragraph 2 to include this. |
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've had too many changes of social worker • I've had too many placement moves • I don't understand what happens if I don't get on my social worker and how I can ask for a different social worker and who supports me with this • We need people to listen to us – the needs of children and young people are not supported as well as they should be • As we grow older, there are too many flaws in how the system and process work • It's important that if you fall back, there is a social worker or PA to sit with you in meetings and refer you on to services – it's important our support system is still there for us • We need foster carers who have had experience with all of the issues we are facing as care leavers as well as care leavers who aren't struggling with these issues <p>Carers need to know what support and services are available both for themselves and for children and young people and how to access these services</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>We met Fostering Services Manager and told him that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We are interested to be involved in future foster carer training; 2) We are interested in being involved in interviewing staff; 3) We are interested in having a chance to meet the fostering social worker. This is because we might get on better with the fostering social worker than our own, and there might also be less change and/or more regular visits. We don't know why our foster carers get to speak with our foster carers, but we don't get to speak with theirs; 4) We think it might be sensible for the fostering social worker and our social worker to speak and plan together with our carer's and to also invite us (children and young people) to participate; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Foster Services Manager will look at the opportunities for further training and interviewing. Currently, CiCC members do get involved in training new children's services staff, but not foster carers. In 2017, CiCC members provided some 'key messages' for foster cares, delivering during training, and also recorded a conversation about what makes a good foster carer, again to be used in training. 2) There is an appetite to take a more standardised approach to including young people in staff interviews. Currently, young people are included in different ways by different teams. Complications arise with the requirement to take children and young people out of school for these activities. Voice and Influence Team will discuss alternative and creative ways of children and young people being involved with colleagues in the HR team and seek to understand the quantity and frequency of the requirement. 3) To be followed up by Fostering Services Manager to understand if and why this is not already happening. 4) This should already be happening as part of our routine case management and placement planning process.

		We are currently updating our social work practice standards (the guidelines/rules to what social workers do). Within the fostering standards section we have included a clear expectation that fostering s/w will “Meet the children in care from time to time and see their bedrooms.”
3	<p>We met with Virtual School Head to talk about ways of celebrating successes of children living in care and care leavers, and also about Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>We said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that we can review the last paperwork produced at the PEP before we have our next one <p>Make sure the connection between the Virtual School Officer (VSO) and the school is good;</p>	<p>The new e PEP will start in January 2019, it is a continuous open document so the school can share it with a young person at any time and anything can be added; reports; certificates; photographs with young person’s permission; out of school activities that will give a full picture of the educational journey.</p> <p>The Virtual School is continuing to support good relationships with designated teachers in schools, increase training around the educational experience for Looked After Children and Young People so school staff have a greater awareness.</p>
4	<p>We met with our Corporate Parents and discussed education and the No Wrong Door Project. We said:</p> <p>1.Virtual School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help/support us with our revision and exams. • Some LAC have missed a lot of school – could there be a provision for them to catch up (maybe with longer days in school for those that need it?) • If you get free school meals, the allowance you are given to spend doesn’t allow you to choose a cold meal (like a salad) and isn’t enough for a drink also; • Fund the school equipment that we need, stationery, protractors, compasses and uniform; <p>2.We reviewed wording for a new Aspire House (NWD) leaflet and discussed the ‘No Wrong Door’ project. We did this by: Splitting into four groups to look at the draft guide, add to it and amend and consider what should and should not be included.</p>	<p>1. The Head of Children in Care and Young People reported that the Virtual School may be looking to provide extra weeks of tuition in the school holidays for those that need to/want to catch up. The young people indicated that they would be interested in this. Chris Whitfield (Virtual School Headteacher) is working with groups of schools to look at setting this up for the future.</p> <p>Revision sessions and individual support continue to be offered. Longer days, where necessary, can be discussed in PEP meetings or between them if necessary.</p> <p><i>Note: comments re: FSM and equipment were addressed with young people and their carers individually.</i></p> <p>2. The acting Lead Commissioner amended the document accordingly with more straight-forward language. Design team have created a draft which will be shared with CiCC at its next meeting.</p>
5	<p>We wanted the opportunity to feed back some positive and negative experiences of our journey in care.</p> <p>We discussed the option of Bath University’s offer to come in and do a session with us and agreed to invite them.</p>	<p>The Youth Voice Lead supported the CiCC to work in partnership with Bath University to put together the agenda for the Shared Guardianship Session on 19 March 2019.</p> <p>Bath University facilitated a series of exercises with the group to generate discussion, capture feedback and promote learning.</p>

As part of the session, these were the main areas we wanted to give our feedback on:

Exercise 1: Reviews meetings: we discussed and gave our views on what are they for, what works, what could improve?

Positives about review meetings

- ✓ I felt listened to
- ✓ They follow through on what they said they would do, and they focus on what I need
- ✓ I was able to chair my own review meetings towards the end
- ✓ My brothers were able to come to my review meeting
- ✓ The venue of the meetings was changed from school to my foster placement
- ✓ I was asked what I wanted
- ✓ I am happy, they are well organised meetings
- ✓ I am given the choice/freedom of whether I attend meetings
- ✓ I feel like I have a fair platform where I can express my views.

Negatives about review meetings

- ✗ They ask lots of questions
- ✗ My IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) changed
- ✗ There were lots of Social Worker changes
- ✗ There are questions on the form that ask my parents about how I am getting on at school – “How are they supposed to know that?” The questions should be appropriate for me
- ✗ I would like to move the location of my review meetings as I don't like being in cramped spaces – no one has offered me this option
- ✗ I am aware that I could use the Mind of My Own app to share my feelings and record what I want to say at the meetings, but I am concerned about security and my words being changed – I prefer to hand write what I want to say and pass this on.

What can be improved?

- * I would like to receive a short profile about my Social Worker (and other Wiltshire Council staff who will be involved with me) before I meet them, so

A report on these outcomes will be made available to Wiltshire Council so operational children's services teams embed the learning.

Bath University with the agreement of the CiCC/Wiltshire Council will be looking to take the learning into their Social Worker degree course.

The Interim Head of Children in Care and Young People noted the issues raised around what the young people in care said could be improved and is requesting one-page profiles, starting with senior

<p>that I know what they look like, who they are and a bit of information about them.</p> <p>* My Social Worker should also know about me – a summary of my important points so that I don't have to keep repeating them and what I liked to be called. "I don't like Stephen, I am Steve!"</p> <p>* I am on a Pathway Plan, but I haven't seen a copy of it – could my PA share a copy with me?</p> <p>Exercise 2: Placements: moving in, staying, and moving on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were your feelings when you were moving in? We said it... Can be scary at first but once you get settled in you realise that there was nothing to worry about. • How did you feel about staying (being in placement for a period of time)? We said it's.... More comfortable when you stay in one place for a long time. <p>Exercise 3: Social workers: A job description and a person specification, poem.</p> <p>We were asked to think about our Social Worker/s and write a poem starting with the words "I remember".</p> <p>We didn't all do poems but spoke of ones that we remember for all sorts of reasons, some funny and some not.</p> <p>What we all agreed is that it doesn't matter who they are: young, old, male, female, colour or anything else ...all we want are people who care and have the skills to support us.</p>	<p>managers and managers across the service, progressing to Social Workers, support workers and Personal Assistants (PAs). All one-page profiles to be kept locally so that they are used accordingly.</p> <p>Social Workers work closely with their children and young people. When a Social Worker leaves the LA, they will produce a 'short pen picture' of their child - to ensure that the new Social Worker gets to know their child or young person ahead of meeting them. We are capturing the 'pen picture' with our children over the summer break.</p> <p>All managers have discussed this issue of Pathway Plans in their team meetings. This triggered an audit including a question: Audit Q. Is there evidence that it has been written with the young person. Do they have a copy?</p> <p>Auditors could not evidence, and team managers said it is not consistent. Therefore, there has been an agreed amnesty: during the very next visit to our children, PA's and Social Workers will take a hard copy to discuss again and case note that it has been achieved (28 May 2019).</p>
<p>6 Chair of the CiCC raised the issue that young people in care cannot attend the Corporate Parent Panel meetings due to the time of day that they are held. This was raised directly with The Director, Families and Children's Services on 7 March 2019, during the joint meeting of the Wiltshire Youth Union/CiCC.</p>	<p>This issue was raised at the Corporate Parent Panel (CPP) on 19 March 2019:</p> <p>Timing of CPP Meeting</p> <p>The Director, Families and Children's Services reported that she had recently spoken with the Chair of CiCC (who has previously attended CPP meetings and is the current Chair of the Children in Care Council) who said that she had really enjoyed attending the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings but was currently in Year 11 studying for her GCSEs and found the current timing of the meetings to be a barrier for her.</p>

		<p>The Youth Voice Lead reported that whilst schools will release students to attend meetings such as the CPP and Children’s Select Committee, it is still inhibiting for the students as they are missing “the school day”.</p> <p>The Chair asked Panel Members for their views and it was suggested that later meetings/Saturday meetings or meetings during the school holidays could be considered. It was agreed that this would be further investigated outside of the meeting, but that for now the meetings would remain as they are.</p> <p>CPP agreed action: Officers to investigate changing the times/days of the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and report back to the next meeting.</p>
7	<p>We wanted to take forward our action from 2018 around making a mental health awareness video, so that other young people might be helped by it.</p> <p>We discussed what we could do and asked The Youth Voice Lead for ideas and to support us making it.</p> <p>We looked at different types of videos and agreed on doing a Lego version. We also decided that this could be our CiCC ‘Brand’ and we could make other videos using the same Lego characters and add ones when new members joined CiCC.</p> <p>We wrote a script about mental health awareness and each member took a turn in making the video.</p> <p>Once we have finished the video we plan to promote it.</p>	<p>The Youth Voice Lead liaised with the internal Comms Team and discussed the option of Lego format characters being used for animated videos as the CiCC branding going forward.</p> <p>Wiltshire Councils Communications Team’s Technical Support Officer produced a demo list of animated Lego characters and facilitated a session with CiCC members to ‘animate and voice over’ each character to each one of the CiCC members.</p> <p>The first test draft version has been produced and will be edited in conjunction with the CiCC: https://youtu.be/3CSojc1zaUQ</p> <p>This video has been viewed and shared with the Corporate Parent Panel.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council will support and promote this and further videos to other stakeholders and partner organisations.</p>
8	<p>We want to get more young people to be members of the CiCC.</p> <p>So far, here are some of the things we have done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members manned a CiCC stand at a Post-16 Options event in Trowbridge on 4 December 2018. We spoke to young people who are in care that came to the event and some of them gave us their details because they wanted to join CiCC. 	<p>The Youth Voice Lead organised the stand and supported the production of CiCC literature for the event, transport and refreshments.</p> <p>Sarah Banks attended and co-manned the stand with CiCC members. Photographs were taken at the event so that CiCC can use them within future advertising. A ‘guess the sweets’ competition was put together and young people who attended the event were asked to take part.</p> <p>Sarah Banks - (Youth Voice Lead) collated the details of the young people in care who attended the event and expressed an interest in joining</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced our CiCC newsletter for Jan-June 2019, which included an article recognising National Care Day, which was in February. 	<p>CiCC. An email was sent to each with information on CiCC, newsletter and membership form.</p> <p>The Children and Families Commissioning Team has supported the editing and branding of the CiCC newsletter and the finalised newsletter will be mailed out to children and young people aged 8+ with an invitation to join CiCC, and other partner organisations.</p> <p>Sarah Banks – (Youth Voice Lead) is working with CiCC to update its action plan for 2019 to include an increase in the number of CiCC members and its diversity.</p>
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4. Activities during the last 12 months

As well as meeting and considering policy matters, CiCC has engaged in many activities, which have included:

- Discussions and engagement with corporate parents at Shared Guardian meetings and social events
- Enhanced CiCC voice by attending the new Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU), which combined the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY) and Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) creating a stronger youth voice forum
- Consultation – Youth Consultant Pilot Project
- Induction training for new staff within Children’s Services
- Recruitment panels for senior appointments
- Host to Bath University – consultation session and feedback to support learning for Social Workers
- Held a CiCC stand at a Post 16 Options Event in Trowbridge, resulting in new members
- Researching external venues for 2019 forum meetings
- Engagement in CSE and County Lines Awareness Campaign in partnership with Wiltshire Police
- Co-produced a CiCC Mental Health Awareness video.

During 2018, a different forum model was reviewed by CiCC members. This review included opportunities to meet at a different time of the week, using different community venues across the county, having more time for fun, consultation, and personal development activities.

Reasons for change were considered necessary as:

- The existing format for CiCC was not ensuring a good enough experience for members
- This led to difficulties in recruiting and retaining members
- Holding all meetings at County Hall was not conducive to the safe and effective management of the group.

Proposals were drafted with young people from CiCC and actions have been taken forward into the 2019.

5. Sample Agenda

Time	CiCC – Agenda 4 June 2019 5.00-6.30pm
5.00pm	Welcome – How are we all?
5.10pm	Activity – Review/Feedback You Said, We Did – review/comment What can this tell us about what we have done...and want to do for 2019?
5.25pm	Issue-based activity/discussion e.g. mental health, video – finalizing it and discussion on how we will promote it...community, schools etc...
5.40pm	Break
5.50pm	Activity – Ofsted Wiltshire inspecting Wiltshire Council You have the chance to tell them what your views are and what you think, so would you like to discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you know who Ofsted are? 2. What would you like them to hold WC accountable for? 3. Some good things you think WC do....Some not so good things? 4. How would you like Ofsted to feed back to you their findings? 5. Do you want the chance to talk to them ? Weds 12 June – 4.30pm at County Hall
6.30pm	Close

6. Recruitment

Recruitment remains a key priority to ensure secure and meaningful representation. Further support to promote CiCC and to capture a wider cohort of youth voice will be sought through partnership work with the WYU. It will also be linked to a 'Youth Consultant' Pilot which has been funded by Wiltshire Council and is being developed in conjunction with Wiltshire Community First.

This work may include the following pilot activities:

- Youth Consultants (x2) attached to and project work directed by CiCC
- Youth leadership support offered by trained Youth Consultants
- Joint project work – raising awareness, campaigns, initiatives
- Stronger voice representation at strategic level – i.e. panels, committees, steering groups
- Partnership working with organisations: Wiltshire Council Children's Services, Wiltshire Council Communities Team, Wiltshire Council Public Health, Healthwatch Wiltshire (delivered by Evolving Communities), Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership, Virgin Care (delivering child health services), Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (delivering child and adolescent mental health services), Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, Wiltshire Community First.

7. Priorities for future development

CiCC has identified priorities that it wishes to work on in 2019/20, some of which are continued from 2018/19, and are in order of priority:

1. Continuing to raise awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing
2. Raising awareness of bullying
3. Continuing to make newsletters and promote our group
4. Training new staff – children’s services induction, Wiltshire college and any other opportunities
5. Being professional when we have meetings and develop skills to be effective representatives
6. Meeting CiCCs from other counties (it will be more fun if there are some activities)
7. Taking part in consultations
8. Influencing decision makers by sharing experiences and that of others

8. Meeting dates

In January 2019, the following schedule for the year was proposed. WYU meeting dates have also been included as CiCC members are active in the WYU and represent looked after children within this youth voice forum.

Month	Children in Care Council	Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU)
January	Dispatch out to CiCC with Meeting Dates January CiCC Newsletter	Dispatch out to WYU with Meeting Dates
February	Tue 5 February, County Hall, Trowbridge 5pm-6.30pm	Thur 7 February, County Hall, Trowbridge 4.45pm – 6.30pm
	Youth Elections – 11-29 February	
March	Tue 19 March, County Hall, Trowbridge Shared Guardian Session, (Corporate Parents), 5pm-6.30pm	Thur 7 March, WYU/UKYP Induction County Hall, Trowbridge, 4.45pm-7.15pm
April	Tue 9 April, Five Rivers, Salisbury 5pm-6.30pm	Dispatch out to WYU
May	Thur 2 May, Joint meeting - County Hall, Trowbridge, 4.45pm-6.30pm	
June	Tue 4 Jun, County Hall, Trowbridge 5pm-6.30pm	Dispatch out to WYU
July	Thurs 4 Jul, Joint meeting - County Hall, Trowbridge, 5.00-6.30pm	
August	No Meetings	
September	Tue 10 Sep, County Hall, Trowbridge Shared Guardian Session (Corporate Parents), 5pm-6.30pm	Thur 26 Sep, County Hall, Trowbridge 4.45pm-6.30pm
October	Sat 12 October, Fun Day Details to be confirmed	Dispatch out to WYU
November	Joint meeting for all – anti-bullying week (11-15 th), 5pm-6.30pm Thurs 7 Nov, County Hall, Trowbridge	
December	Tues 10 Dec, CiCC Christmas Event Details to be confirmed	Thurs 12 Dec, WYU Christmas Event Details to be confirmed

NB. 'Dispatches', referenced in the table above include surveys, newsletters/news articles/updates, and community-based engagement.

9. Moving on – Care Leavers Forum

In October 2018, Wiltshire Council launched its Care Leavers' Promise. The Council consulted with local care experienced young people about the types of support that would be useful when moving out of care. In support of the Promise, a meeting was sought with a group of these young people to discuss the option of co-creating a Care Leavers Forum. Wiltshire Council wants to strengthen care leavers voice and work in partnership to co-develop elements of the Promise, such as the Care Leavers App.

On 21 November, Care Leavers discussed their views during an informal get together with the Head of Children in Care and Young People, the Youth Voice Lead in Children's Commissioning and a selection of Wiltshire Council PA's.

Care leavers fed back that they wanted:

- to have a regular forum
- to be held quarterly
- meetings to be co-chaired – care leaver & PA
- venues to be booked around the county- so as many young people as possible could attend
- a time of day that suits them – after 6.00pm

Meeting dates:

Month	Care Experienced Forum – Schedule 2019
March	Friday 29 March Longfield Community Centre, Weavers Drive, Trowbridge, BA14 7DZ 6.00 – 9.00 pm
June	Tuesday 18 June Community Room, Tesco, Salisbury 6.00 – 9.00pm
September	Weds 25 September Meeting room, High Street, Chippenham (access next to Town Hall/Warrens Bakery) 6.00 – 9.00pm
December	Friday 6 December Longfield Community Centre, Weavers Drive, Trowbridge, BA14 7DZ 6.00 – 9.00pm

Work actively continues to support the forum and engage with our care experienced young people. The Wiltshire Care Leavers Annual Report for April 2019 - March 2020 will be available in April 2020.